



Mississippi Workers' Compensation Commission

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<http://www.mwcc.state.ms.us>

Liles Williams, Chairman
Barney J. Schoby, Commissioner
Lydia Quarles, Commissioner

Jo Ann McDonald, Commission Secretary

February 9, 2005

Ms Sam S. Atkinson
Director of Performance Audit
Office of the State Auditor
P. O. Box 956
Jackson, MS. 39205

RE: Workers Compensation Commission Follow Up Review

Dear Ms. Atkinson:

You will find summarized below the work that we have done in response to the follow up review done by your department. Please feel free to contact me if you need additional information or have suggestions that would be helpful as we work to correct these deficiencies.

Commissioners Schoby, Quarles and I have met and reviewed your draft of "A Follow-Up Review of the Mississippi Worker's Compensation Commission". We do not have any changes to make to this draft.

Page 2 of your draft listed four major issues from the March 2004 report which need to be addressed: There were no written policies and procedures in place to account for time and leave of Commissioners and other employees.

None of the three MWCC commissioners accurately reported personal and sick leave taken. Personnel actions were taken by the Chairman without the approval of the full Commission. Administrative Judges and Court reporters employed by the Commission were not required to document their time in a manner that would provide accountability for time worked.

The following follow up actions have been or are in the process of being taken:

On January 11, 2005 the full commission met to discuss and agree on the following items: a) administration of the commission, whereby the commission as a body is responsible for promulgation of rules and regulations, and the commission shall appoint such officers and employees as are necessary adequately to administer the Worker's Compensation Law"; the chairman shall be the administrative head of the commission and shall have the final authority in all matters relating to assignment of cases for hearing and trial and the administrative work of the commission and its employees; b) Current Organization Chart, we do not feel that we have the most productive and efficient organization and we set the date of July 1, 2005 to make changes to improve our productivity and overall performance; c) official hours of the commission, we agreed that our official hours are 8:00 AM until 5:00 PM and we agreed to allow department heads certain flexibility as long as their departments are adequately staffed during these hours, and we clearly stated our expectations of properly reporting time off for all employees within their departments; d) we also discussed open door policy and more efficient use of our computer system and providing the necessary

training for those who need it. These policies are attached to our official minutes which are recorded and kept in the office of the Commission Secretary, Ms JoAnn McDonald.

The commissioners and I met with all supervisory personnel on January 26, 2005 to review and explain these policies.

During our meeting of January 11, we discussed the Administrative Judge (AJ) and Court Reporter (CR) issues, but did not reach consensus. The commissioners held a subsequent meeting on February 4, 2005 to discuss the AJ and CR issue. After considerable discussion, we did reach consensus that all employees including AJ's, CR's and Commissioners must be held accountable to the same policies. In fact it is the responsibility of the Commissioners, AJ's and other Supervisory personnel to set the standard for others to follow and not take advantage of their positions. The Commissioners charged me with the responsibility of rewording certain sections of the Policy Handbook and outlining procedures for AJ's and CR's regarding time keeping. Unfortunately Commissioner Quarles is out of the office this week, therefore we will meet with all AJ's and CR's next week to explain this policy. I felt it more important for all three commissioners to be present than to have the meeting this week. It will take place next week.

As your draft stated on page 3, we have adopted a formal personnel handbook, we will be making changes to correct the wording as related to AJ's, CR's and commissioners.

Also item 3 notes that personnel actions were taken by the chairman without the consent or assistance of the commissioners. That has been corrected as outlined in item 1 above "administration of the commission".

After you have the opportunity to read this response, please call me with your comments and suggestions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Liles Williams".

Liles Williams
Chairman